

The role and impact of Armed conflict on women: the case of the Kerio Valley, 1978-2007

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Abstract:

The focus of this research is the role and impact of the Kerio Valley armed conflict on women. The research begins with an examination and analysis of the relations of communities living in the Kerio Valley in different historical times and, in particular, the Pokot and Marakwet, who are the main target of this research. This provides a background to the understanding of the conflict and the role of women in it. The study was carried out among the Pokot who live in Kolowa, Bartabwa and Barwesa of the larger Baringo District and among the Marakwet who live in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Marak wet District. The study examined the conflict from 1978 to 2007. In order to understand the conflict, the study argued that the conflict was caused by various factors. The weapons that were used came from different wartorn countries, alongside the communities' traditional weapons. The general conclusion here is that these weapons introduced a new warfare in the valley that influenced women to be involved in the conflict. These roles varied from active roles to those which were passive, but in one way or the other contributed in sustaining the conflict. As the conflict intensified, the post-colonial governments launched disarmament operations that were in one way or another faced by various challenges. It, therefore, became hard for the government security personnel to rid the region of the modem and deadly weapons. The study further argues that the conflict impacted on women in the entire region. This affected life in the valley either in a negative way or in a positive way. Negatively, the conflict inflicted suffering to a large section of the population, who lost their family members and livelihood, as well as being displaced and property destroyed. Positively, there were gains associated with the conflict, ranging from raided livestock to benefits gained by those who took part in trading in arms.